

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited through the ownership of media channels by large corporations.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. Freedom of the press and the perpetuation of diverse ideas are the only way to ensure that we continue to have a democracy. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

As it is now, I typically watch NPR because it provides the least biased coverage and in Richmond, we even see BBC News on NPR. I notice that none of the networks are publishing this ruling, as it is in their favor - exactly the opposite of what the American public wants. The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process. I urge you to reconsider finalizing these rules, until the public has more time to review them and provide input. I have written to my two senators and representative informing them that I am against this deregulation.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Blythe Heywood